

# Christen Sveaas Art Foundation: The Unseen Selected by Hurvin Anderson

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Painter Hurvin Anderson (b. 1965, UK) reflects on illusory and fragmentary space and depictions of black figures and experience in *The Unseen*, an artist-curated selection of 25 works from the Christen Sveaas Art Foundation.

The exhibition draws both on the prologue to Ralph Ellison's epoch-defining novel, *Invisible Man* (1952), about bigotry and the invisibility of black lives in 1950s America, and the artist's own work, informed by European painting traditions and his Jamaican heritage. His selection combines the work of lesser-known artists with modern and contemporary icons, whom explore aspects of 'the unseen' through paint, collage, fabric and found objects.

Amongst these works, Tewodros Hagos (b. 1974, Ethiopia) records the plight of refugees from Africa brought ashore in lifejackets and insulation blankets, depicting them as individuals rather than numbers in media reports of the migrant crisis. On a neighbouring wall Glenn Ligon's (b. 1960, USA) text-based work *Stranger #65* takes inspiration from James Baldwin's 1953 essay, *Stranger in the Village* (1953), exploring invisibility through the near inability to decipher words stencilled in coal dust.

Anderson is also drawn to artists who investigate the limits of perception both physically and metaphorically, including works that break with convention or exceed their frames. Through the use of materials such as textiles and jute sacking in the work of Ibrahim Mahama (b. 1987, Ghana), or through the contortion of perspective in the paintings of Caragh Thuring (b. 1972, Belgium), the display creates a tension between what can be seen and what is invisible to the viewer. Svein Bolling's (b. 1948, Norway) surreal,

crouching Mann 1 (1975-79) is partially obscured by shadows, while the blurry domestic setting of Howard Hodgkin's (1932-2017, UK) Interior with Figures(1977-84) is at once intrusive and illusive.

This exhibition is the third of four displays drawn from the Christen Sveaas Art Foundation, which holds more than 2000 works by 300 artists from around the world. The Unseen features 25 of these artists including Michael Bevilacqua, Ross Bleckner, Amoake Boafo, Svein Bolling, Borghild Røed Lærum, Constantin Brancusi, Matt Connors, Lars Elling, Tewodros Hagos, Mona Orstad Hansen, Thore Heramb, Howard Hodgkin, Per Krohg, Glenn Ligon, Ibrahim Mahama, Herman Mbamba, Simphiwe Ndzube, Henrik Placht, Robert Rauschenberg, Caragh Thuring, Judy Serks Vevie, Jacob Weidemann, Stanley Whitney, Christopher Wool and Toby Ziegler.

The fourth exhibition in the series will feature the selections of Donna Huanca (b. 1980, USA), coming to Whitechapel Gallery in autumn 2022.